

WASHINGTON, DC—Rep. DeFazio (D-Springfield) today sent a letter to Governor Kulongoski, urging him to push state agencies to reach a resolution with the federal government on a disposal site for materials dredged from the Siuslaw River.

The Coast Guard has warned that the lack of dredging of the Siuslaw River is of concern and may affect Coast Guard operations. The Port of Siuslaw has received nearly \$2.2 million in federal funds to dredge the mouth and channel of the river, including \$1.5 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) to also dredge the turning basin. However, there is currently no disposal site for the dredged materials. The current disposal site has been in use since 1929 but is no longer viable due to regulatory changes. State and federal agencies have not been able to come to agreement on a new disposal site and if a resolution is not reached before April 19th, the Port will lose the ARRA funds.

DeFazio has a long history during his time in Congress of fighting for and securing federal funds for dredging. He has consistently secured funds to do this vital work, despite the inability of past administrations to budget for even the most modest of dredging projects along Oregon's south coast. Failure to dredge the Port of Siuslaw is dangerous, could limit port use and would be financially devastating to this community.

The letter is below:

Governor Kulongoski

900 Court Street

Salem, OR 97301

Dear Governor Kulongoski:

I am writing regarding the unresolved status of a disposal site for dredge material at the Port of Siuslaw. I am troubled to learn that after working for nearly a year, and after spending over \$385,000 in federal funds, federal agencies have been unable to garner an agreement with state agencies on a permanent disposal site, potentially leading to the loss of an additional \$1.5 million in federal funds.

I have worked diligently during my tenure in Congress to secure federal funds to dredge small ports along Oregon's south coast. Since I entered Congress, every administration, regardless of party, has failed to budget needed funds for even the most modest of dredging projects in this area. I have had to fight nearly every year to secure funds in the congressional budget process for this work. These federal funds are essential to keep our ports open and safe, and to ensure Oregon's coastal communities are able to thrive.

The port has gone without extensive dredging along its channel since 1974, and has only had the funds to do maintenance dredging in the 1980s and in 1995. The U.S. Coast Guard is very concerned about the conditions in the channel and the turning basin. The Port of Siuslaw has received nearly \$2.2 million in federal funds to dredge the mouth and channel of the river, including nearly \$1.5 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds to also dredge the turning basin. This long-overdue dredging is sorely needed to maintain the safety and navigability of the port. I have fought to keep ARRA funds on Oregon's south coast and the port is currently at-risk of losing those ARRA funds if they aren't obligated by April 19th.

I am aware the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has exhausted its two five-year temporary designations for a disposal site. The USACE and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) have had no trouble at other Oregon ports facing similar deadlines to come to resolution on a permanent disposal site. In this instance, the inability to reach agreement with state partners is risking funds for this dredging.

For the last 30 years, the Port of Siuslaw and the USACE have used the same disposal site, and have received letters of consistency from the State of Oregon for this purpose. The site was even used as a disposal site as far back as 1929. While I do not expect state agencies to simply designate the same disposal site without review, I do expect that after a year of work at tremendous public cost, combined with the potential loss of hard won dredging funds, the parties work in earnest to come to a workable solution.

I am confident your leadership will help the parties find an agreement that meets environmental requirements and also allows this dredging to go forward without losing critical federal dollars in the process.

Sincerely,

Peter A. DeFazio

Member of Congress